



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/559,671	12/06/2005	Gerardus Swinkels	P28809	2972
7055	7590	06/10/2009	EXAMINER	
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C. 1950 ROLAND CLARKE PLACE RESTON, VA 20191				HENKEL, DANIELLE B
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1797				
			NOTIFICATION DATE	
			DELIVERY MODE	
			06/10/2009	
			ELECTRONIC	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

gbpatent@gbpatent.com
pto@gbpatent.com

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/559,671	SWINKELS, GERARDUS	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	DANIELLE HENKEL	1797	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 March 2009.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 18-38 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 18-38 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. The amendment filed March 4, 2009 has been entered and fully considered.
2. The objection to the IDS filed 8/2/2007 has been withdrawn and a fully initialed IDS supplied.
3. Claims 18-38 are pending, of which claim 38 is new.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.
5. Claims 18-32 and 35-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SCHLIMME (US 3849255) with evidence of REYNOLDS (DE 17932).
 - a. With respect to claim 18, SCHLIMME teaches a device for malting grains comprising a tower with a plurality of stories (working chambers) delineated by story floors and air-permeable supporting floors (racks) associated with each story, structured and arranged to support grain (Column 1, lines 59-65, Figure 1). SCHLIMME also teaches air flow paths associated with each story comprising supply channels (ducts), displacement elements (air conveyer), and discharge channels (ducts) in which the air flows through the supply channels, displacement elements, supporting floors and the discharge path (Column 3,

lines 6-24, Figure 4). SCHLIMME also teaches a central opening within the respective story through which the respective air supply channel path for the story flows are arranged (Column 3, lines 31-40, Figures 1, 4). SCHLIMME does not explicitly disclose the discharge channels also are arranged through the central opening, however at the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to arrange the discharge channels in the central opening, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routing skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86 USPQ 70. As further evidence that placing a discharge path in the central cylindrical stack is a design choice that was well known in the art at the time of the invention, REYNOLDS shows both the supply and discharge paths arranged in the central cylinder stack (Figure 2).

- b. With respect to claim 19, SCHLIMME teaches air conditioning elements to condition the air supplied to the grain (Column 2, lines 26-30).
- c. With respect to claim 20, SCHLIMME teaches the discharge channel (duct) empties through an opening into an outside environment (Column 3, lines 28-29).
- d. With respect to claim 21, SCHLIMME teaches a central floor opening through at least one of the respective story floors with a supply channel and vertical stacks with supply and discharge channels that are arranged to abut each other as they extend vertically (Column 1, line 60- Column 2, line 21, Figure 3) but doesn't explicitly disclose the vertical stacks extending through the central floor opening. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of

ordinary skill in the art to place the vertical abutting stacks in the central floor opening, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routing skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86 USPQ 70. As further evidence that placing a discharge path in the central cylindrical stack is a design choice that is well known in the art REYNOLDS shows both the supply and discharge paths arranged in the central cylinder stack (Figure 2).

- e. With respect to claim 22, SCHLIMME teaches the central floor opening is circular (Column 1, lines 59-60).
- f. With respect to claim 23, SCHLIMME teaches a supply channel (duct) with an at least primarily segmented cross-section (openings) at the central floor opening (Column 2, lines 5-10, Figure 1).
- g. With respect to claim 24, SCHLIMME teaches the claimed invention comprising a circular central opening except for the floor opening being at least 10 meters in diameter. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have a diameter of at least 10 meters, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.
- h. With respect to claim 25, SCHLIMME teaches the claimed invention comprising a circular central opening except for the floor opening being at least 12 meters in diameter. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have a diameter of at least 12 meters, since it

Art Unit: 1797

has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

i. With respect to claim 26, SCHLIMME teaches the claimed invention comprising annular supporting floors except for the interior diameter being at least 10 meters. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have a diameter of at least 10 meters, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

j. With respect to claim 27, SCHLIMME teaches the claimed invention comprising annular supporting floors except for the interior diameter being at least 12 meters. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have a diameter of at least 12 meters, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

k. With respect to claim 28, SCHLIMME teaches the claimed invention comprising annular supporting floors except for the radial span being at least 7 meters. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have a radial span of at least 7 meters, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art,

discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

- I. With respect to claim 29, SCHLIMME teaches the supporting floor is rotatable around a rotational axis extending through a central axis of the annular shape (Column 2, line 55-67).
- m. With respect to claim 30, SCHLIMME teaches air conditioning elements located within an outer periphery of the story floors (Column 2, lines 26-30, Figure 1), but does not explicitly disclose them located below a lowermost supporting floor. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to place the air conditioning below the lowermost floor since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86, USPQ 70.
- n. With respect to claim 31, SCHLIMME teaches air conditioning elements located within an outer periphery of the story floors (Column 2, lines 26-30, Figure 1), but does not explicitly disclose them located above an uppermost supporting floor. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to place the air conditioning above the uppermost floor since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86, USPQ 70.
- o. With respect to claim 32, SCHLIMME teaches air conditioning elements located within an outer periphery of the story floors (Column 2, lines 26-30, Figure 1).

Art Unit: 1797

- p. With respect to claim 35, SCHLIMME teaches the supporting floors are air permeable (Column 3, lines 15-17).
- q. With respect to claim 36, SCHLIMME teaches the supporting floors are air permeable and therefore by definition are perforated (Column 3, lines 15-17).
- r. With respect to claim 37, SCHLIMME teaches a method for malting grains in a tower with a plurality of stories delineated by story floors by placing grain (malt) on respective air-permeable supporting floors (racks) associated with the stories, guiding air through flow paths associated with the stories that flow from supply channels (ducts) through displacement elements (air conveyor, blower) through the supporting floor and grain, and through a discharge path, and guiding the flow path through at least one central opening within the story (Column 3, lines 6-51).
- s. With respect to claim 38, SCHLIMME teaches a device for malting grains comprising a tower with a plurality of stories (working chambers) delineated by story floors and air-permeable supporting floors (racks) associated with each story, structured and arranged to support grain (Column 1, lines 59-65, Figure 1). SCHLIMME also teaches at least one supply channel (duct), displacement elements (air conveyer), and at least one discharge channel (ducts) (Column 3, lines 6-24, Figure 4). SCHLIMME also teaches an air flow generator structure and arranged to generate an air flow path through flows through the supply channels, displacement elements, supporting floors and the discharge path (Column 3, lines 6-24, Figure 4). SCHLIMME also teaches a central opening

within the respective story through which the respective air supply channel path for the story flows are arranged (Column 3, lines 31-40, Figures 1, 4).

SCHLIMME does not explicitly disclose the discharge channels also are arranged through the central opening, however at the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to arrange the discharge channels in the central opening, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routing skill in the art. *In re Japikse*, 86 USPQ 70. As further evidence that placing a discharge path in the central cylindrical stack is a design choice that was well known in the art at the time of the invention, REYNOLDS shows both the supply and discharge paths arranged in the central cylinder stack (Figure 2).

6. Claims 33 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SCHLIMME (US 3849255) in view of NEUBERT (US 3730846).

a. With respect to claim 33, SCHLIMME does not explicitly disclose another supporting floor for drying below the lowermost supporting floor. However, NEUBERT teaches a space below the lowermost supporting floor (treatment spaces) to support germinated grain to be dried (Column 4, lines 36-38, Figure 1). At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the germinating tower of SCHLIMME to include the supporting floor for drying grain below the lowermost floor as taught by NEUBERT because it allows for heating the above chambers to a desired temperature (Column 6,

Art Unit: 1797

line 72 - Column 7, line 5), as well as allows for the use of a simple gravity feed arrangement to provide germinated grain to the drying space (Column 8, lines 50-57).

b. With respect to claim 34, NEUBERT teaches the supporting floor to support the germinated grain to be dried has dimensions similar to those of the supporting floors for germinating (Column 7, lines 6-14).

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 18-37 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.
8. Additionally, in response to Applicant's arguments page 11-12, that it is not an obvious design choice to place the discharge and supply paths in the central stack, the Examiner maintains such an arrangement would be obvious as it was well known in the art as evidenced by REYNOLDS (Figure 2).

Conclusion

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

Art Unit: 1797

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIELLE HENKEL whose telephone number is (571)270-5505. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thur: 11am-8pm, Alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on 571-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/William H. Beisner/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797

/DANIELLE HENKEL/
Examiner, Art Unit 1797